

REMARKS

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 4-8, 10, 12, and 15-19 under 35 UCS § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Harvey (*The Selection of Managers for Foreign Assignments; A Planning Perspective*, The Columbia Journal of World Business) and US Pat. Pub. No. 2001/0034630 (Mayer), further in view of *China HR Manager of the Year*, China Staff, Oct. 2003, Vol. 9, No. 10, p. 23 (China HR), further in view of admitted prior art, and further in view of Broad (US Pub. 2004/0064329). The Examiner has maintained rejection of the claims as explained in prior office actions and relies on Broad to teach retaining information about unselected candidates for consideration in future assignments.

Applicant has amended the claims to indicate more clearly that in the present invention, the timing of the candidate selection process is determined in accordance with a new product launch. In particular, a proposed date for a new product launch is established and used to determine when the process of selecting candidates begins. The claims have further been amended to indicate the assignments are applicable to the new product launch and that after a candidate pool is established, specifications for each assignment are established in relation to the new product launch and candidates are selected according to the specifications. The claims have further been amended to indicate that arrangements are made for the candidates to complete their assignments and return to their home countries in advance of the product launch. The timing of the

selection process is coordinated with the new product launch so that assignments are completed in advance of the new product launch. Support for the claims as amended is found in paragraphs [0008] and [0036].

Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references do not disclose the newly added claim elements of establishing a date for a new product launch, determining a period of years in advance of the product launch date to complete the selection process, completing the selection process as well as the assignments within the period of years, and then launching the product after the assignments are completed and in time for the proposed new product launch date. The addition of the claim elements related to timing indicate that the selection process is driven by the product launch requirements, including the product launch date.

Conclusion

Applicant has amended the claims to distinguish the claimed expatriate associate selection process over the Harvey, Mayer, China HR, and Broad references. Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and such action is earnestly requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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